



# — SECOND — CORINTHIANS



*The Comfort of God FOR and THROUGH His People*

Part 42—“The Importance of Examining Ourselves”— 6 October 2024

**Introduction:** *The Eternal Security of the Believer*

“[Eternal Security] means...that when a person has genuinely believed in Christ as His Savior from sin he is forever secured by God by His keeping power. The basis for this security of salvation does not rest with man, but with God. The security of the believer is based on the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit...The eternal security of the believer by the grace of God is the completion and crowing glory of God’s plan of salvation.”  
—Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*

**Main Point:** The life of a faithful believer necessarily involves times of self-\_\_\_\_\_ so that we might continue to live faithfully as servants of the Lord Jesus.

## 2 Corinthians 13:5-10

### Context

As he prepares to come to Corinth for the third time, he emphasizes that he will be doing so in the power of Christ and will, if necessary, enact discipline upon those who are enabling the spread of false teaching. He loves the Corinthians and will spend and be spent for them, all for the purpose of seeing them built up in their faith.

### Exposition

I. The Corinthians must recognize the seriousness of their situation and should therefore examine themselves. (13:5-6)

*2 Cor. 13:5—<sup>5</sup>Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?<sup>6</sup>—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!<sup>6</sup> I hope you will find out that we have not failed the test.*

“*examine*”—πειράζω (peirazō)—to try, make trial of, test: for the purpose of ascertaining his quality, or what one thinks, or how one will conduct themselves.

“*test*”—δοκιμάζω (dokimazō)—to make a critical examination of someth. to determine genuineness, put to the test, examine.

“If some in Corinth are asking what proof Paul can provide that Christ speaks in him, he turns the question around and challenges them to conduct a spiritual audit on themselves to see how they check out as Christians...”—David Garland

⇒ The focus of their self-examination is to see if they are “\_\_\_\_\_ the faith.”

“...the most satisfactory option is to take [“in the faith”] in a broad sense as referring to Christian conduct that accords with Christian doctrine. That is, ‘being in the faith’ means continuing true to the faith in conduct as well as belief.”—Murray J. Harris

⇒ He then asks them a direct question: “Do you not realize...that Christ is in you?”

### Conflicting Views

I. The seriousness of their sin means that they may profess to be believers but are not actually \_\_\_\_\_.

2. The seriousness of their sin means that, although they were saved, they were not \_\_\_\_\_ faithfully with Christ.

### Important Considerations:

- (1) Paul never questions the genuineness of the faith of the Corinthians. Rather, he assumes it. (1:21-22; 3:2-3)
- (2) There are undoubtedly unbelievers associated with the church, particularly the false teachers. (11:13-15)
- (3) Paul’s concern for the Corinthians throughout the letter has been for them to understand what it means to live rightly in light of Christ’s person and work. (6:14; 7:1) and for them to recognize the true marks of apostolic ministry (1:5-7).

**Key Points:** Both of these applications have validity depending on whether the verse is being applied to a \_\_\_\_\_ or an \_\_\_\_\_.

The application that best fits the text is that of \_\_\_\_\_ a believer to examine themselves and their conduct to see if they are walking in accordance with the Christian faith they profess.

*1 Cor. 11:27-29—<sup>27</sup>Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. <sup>28</sup>Let a person examine (dokimazō) himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. <sup>29</sup>For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.*

⇒ In all likelihood, the proper interpretation of the verse is to recognize that Paul is asking them to do this \_\_\_\_\_.

***He fully expects them to acknowledge their genuine faith in Christ. If that is the case, how did they hear the Gospel?***

*"I hope you will find we have not failed the test"*

"[2 Cor. 13:5] affirms that the Corinthian believers were "in the faith" even though they were sinning grievously by foolishly questioning the credentials of the person who had communicated to them the gospel by which they were saved. Rather than doubt the security of the Corinthian Christians' salvation because of a personal attack on himself, Paul used that very security in Christ to prove his God-given authority and sincerity."—Perry C. Brown

## 2. Paul's prayer for the Corinthians is that they will live out their genuine faith by their obedience to Christ's apostle. (13:7-9)

2 Cor. 13:7—*But we pray to God that you may not do wrong—not that we may appear to have met the test, but that you may do what is right, though we may seem to have failed.*

⇒ The object of the prayer is that the Corinthians would not persist in their \_\_\_\_\_.

⇒ He desires that the Corinthians would know his genuine love for them and not misconstrue his \_\_\_\_\_.

2 Cor. 13:8—*For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth.*

⇒ He assures them that any actions he would be forced to undertake would be in accordance with the \_\_\_\_\_.

2 Cor. 13:9—*For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. Your restoration is what we pray for.*

⇒ He is willing, however, to be misunderstood if that means that the Corinthians will be \_\_\_\_\_ in their faith.

*"restoration"*—κατάρτισις (katartisis)—the process of perfecting, (ie. maturation)

**Key Point:** *Maturity in the faith means that we can at times put aside our own desires for the \_\_\_\_\_ of others so that they might grow in their faith.*

## 3. Paul then reiterates the overall purpose of this last section of the letter. (13:10)

2 Cor. 13:10—*For this reason I write these things while I am away from you, that when I come I may not have to be severe in my use of the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.*

⇒ He does not want to be "\_\_\_\_\_" in dealing with them. His desire is to use His authority to "\_\_\_\_\_" them up.

"Paul simultaneously hopes for good results, and issues a final warning in case his hopes are dashed. He recognizes that the overarching purpose of God in entrusting authority to him is to build the church; yet he knows that sometimes a necessary if painful intermediate step is to tear down faulty construction..." —D.A. Carson

## Concluding Thoughts

- It is necessary at times for the Lord to use His Word in the \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ process in our lives or in our church in order that the process of building up might truly take place.

Jer. 1:9-10—<sup>9</sup> Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said to me, "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. <sup>10</sup> See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

- This process often occurs when we are willing to \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves even as we ask the Lord to \_\_\_\_\_ our hearts.

1 Thess. 2:4—but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts.

Gal. 6:4—But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor.



# SECOND CORINTHIANS

*The Comfort of God FOR and THROUGH His People*



Part 42—"The Importance of Examining Ourselves"—6 October 2024

**Introduction:** *The Eternal Security of the Believer*

"[Eternal Security] means...that when a person has genuinely believed in Christ as His Savior from sin he is forever secured by God by His keeping power. The basis for this security of salvation does not rest with man, but with God. The security of the believer is based on the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit...The eternal security of the believer by the grace of God is the completion and crowing glory of God's plan of salvation."  
—Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*

**Main Point:** The life of a faithful believer necessarily involves times of self-examination so that we might continue to live faithfully as servants of the Lord Jesus.

## 2 Corinthians 13:5-10

### Context

As he prepares to come to Corinth for the third time, he emphasizes that he will be doing so in the power of Christ and will, if necessary, enact discipline upon those who are enabling the spread of false teaching. He loves the Corinthians and will spend and be spent for them, all for the purpose of seeing them built up in their faith.

### Exposition

I. The Corinthians must recognize the seriousness of their situation and should therefore examine themselves. (13:5-6)

*2 Cor. 13:5—<sup>5</sup>Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?<sup>6</sup>—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!<sup>6</sup> I hope you will find out that we have not failed the test.*

"*examine*"—πειράζω (peirazō)—to try, make trial of, test: for the purpose of ascertaining his quality, or what one thinks, or how one will conduct themselves.

"*test*"—δοκιμάζω (dokimazō)—to make a critical examination of someth. to determine genuineness, put to the test, examine.

"If some in Corinth are asking what proof Paul can provide that Christ speaks in him, he turns the question around and challenges them to conduct a spiritual audit on themselves to see how they check out as Christians..."—David Garland

⇒ The focus of their self-examination is to see if they are "in the faith."

"...the most satisfactory option is to take ["in the faith"] in a broad sense as referring to Christian conduct that accords with Christian doctrine. That is, 'being in the faith' means continuing true to the faith in conduct as well as belief."—Murray J. Harris

⇒ He then asks them a direct question: "*Do you not realize...that Christ is in you?*"

### Conflicting Views

I. The seriousness of their sin means that they may profess to be believers but are not actually saved.

2. The seriousness of their sin means that, although they were saved, they were not walking faithfully with Christ.

### Important Considerations:

- (1) Paul never questions the genuineness of the faith of the Corinthians. Rather, he assumes it. (1:21-22; 3:2-3)
- (2) There are undoubtedly unbelievers associated with the church, particularly the false teachers. (11:13-15)
- (3) Paul's concern for the Corinthians throughout the letter has been for them to understand what it means to live rightly in light of Christ's person and work. (6:14; 7:1) and for them to recognize the true marks of apostolic ministry (1:5-7).

**Key Points:** Both of these applications have validity depending on whether the verse is being applied to a believer or an unbeliever.

The application that best fits the text is that of exhorting a believer to examine themselves and their conduct to see if they are walking in accordance with the Christian faith they profess.

*1 Cor. 11:27-29*—<sup>27</sup>Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. <sup>28</sup>Let a person examine (dokimazō) himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. <sup>29</sup>For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.

⇒ In all likelihood, the proper interpretation of the verse is to recognize that Paul is asking them to do this **ironically**.

*He fully expects them to acknowledge their genuine faith in Christ. If that is the case, how did they hear the Gospel?*

*"I hope you will find we have not failed the test"*

"[2 Cor. 13:5] affirms that the Corinthian believers were "in the faith" even though they were sinning grievously by foolishly questioning the credentials of the person who had communicated to them the gospel by which they were saved. Rather than doubt the security of the Corinthian Christians' salvation because of a personal attack on himself, Paul used that very security in Christ to prove his God-given authority and sincerity."—Perry C. Brown

## 2. Paul's prayer for the Corinthians is that they will live out their genuine faith by their obedience to Christ's apostle. (13:7-9)

2 Cor. 13:7—*But we pray to God that you may not do wrong—not that we may appear to have met the test, but that you may do what is right, though we may seem to have failed.*

⇒ The object of the prayer is that the Corinthians would not persist in their **sin**.

⇒ He desires that the Corinthians would know his genuine love for them and not misconstrue his **motives**.

2 Cor. 13:8—*For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth.*

⇒ He assures them that any actions he would be forced to undertake would be in accordance with the **truth**.

2 Cor. 13:9—*For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. Your restoration is what we pray for.*

⇒ He is willing, however, to be misunderstood if that means that the Corinthians will be **matured** in their faith.

*"restoration"—κατάρτισις (katartisis)—the process of perfecting, (ie. maturation)*

**Key Point:** Maturity in the faith means that we can at times put aside our own desires for the **good** of others so that they might grow in their faith.

## 3. Paul then reiterates the overall purpose of this last section of the letter. (13:10)

2 Cor. 13:10—*For this reason I write these things while I am away from you, that when I come I may not have to be severe in my use of the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.*

⇒ He does not want to be "**severe**" in dealing with them. His desire is to use His authority to "\_\_\_\_\_ " them up.

"Paul simultaneously hopes for good results, and issues a final warning in case his hopes are dashed. He recognizes that the overarching purpose of God in entrusting authority to him is to build the church; yet he knows that sometimes a necessary if painful intermediate step is to tear down faulty construction..." —D.A. Carson

## Concluding Thoughts

- It is necessary at times for the Lord to use His Word in the **tearing-down** process in our lives or in our church in order that the process of building up might truly take place.

Jer. 1:9-10—<sup>9</sup>Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said to me, "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. <sup>10</sup>See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

- This process often occurs when we are willing to **examine** ourselves even as we ask the Lord to **search** our hearts.

I Thess. 2:4—but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts.

Gal. 6:4—But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor.